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THE CHARACTERISTIC POLYNOMIALS OF ABELIAN VARIETIES OF DIMENSIONS 3 OVER FINITE FIELDS

SAFIA HALOUI

ABSTRACT. We describe the set of characteristic polynomials of abelian varieties of dimension 3 over finite fields.

1. INTRODUCTION AND RESULTS

The isogeny class of an abelian variety over a finite field is determined by its characteristic polynomial (i.e. the characteristic polynomial of its Frobenius endomorphism). We describe the set of characteristic polynomials which occur in dimension 3; this completes the work of Xing [10] (we will recall his results in this section). Since the problem has been solved in dimensions 1 and 2 (see [8], [6] and [3]), it is sufficient to focus on simple abelian varieties.

Let $p(t)$ be the characteristic polynomial of an abelian variety of dimension g over \mathbb{F}_q (with $q = p^n$). Then the set of its roots has the form $\{\omega_1, \overline{\omega_1}, \dots, \omega_g, \overline{\omega_g}\}$ where the ω_i 's are q -Weil numbers. A monic polynomial with integer coefficients which satisfies this condition is called a *Weil polynomial*. Thus every Weil polynomial of degree 3 has the form

$$p(t) = t^6 + a_1 t^5 + a_2 t^4 + a_3 t^3 + q a_2 t^2 + q^2 a_1 t + q^3$$

for certain integers a_1, a_2 and a_3 . The converse is false; indeed, since the absolute value of the roots of $p(t)$ is prescribed (equal to \sqrt{q}), its coefficients have to be bounded. Section 2 is dedicated to the proof of the following proposition:

Theorem 1.1. *Let $p(t) = t^6 + a_1 t^5 + a_2 t^4 + a_3 t^3 + q a_2 t^2 + q^2 a_1 t + q^3$ be a polynomial with integer coefficients. Then $p(t)$ is a Weil polynomial if and only if either*

$$f(t) = (t^2 - q)^2(t^2 + \beta t + q)$$

where $\beta \in \mathbb{Z}$ and $|\beta| < 2\sqrt{q}$, or the following conditions hold

- (1) $|a_1| < 6\sqrt{q}$,
- (2) $4\sqrt{q}|a_1| - 9q < a_2 \leq \frac{a_1^2}{3} + 3q$,
- (3) $-\frac{2a_1^3}{27} + \frac{a_1 a_2}{3} + q a_1 - \frac{2}{27}(a_1^2 - 3a_2 + 9q)^{3/2} \leq a_3 \leq -\frac{2a_1^3}{27} + \frac{a_1 a_2}{3} + q a_1 + \frac{2}{27}(a_1^2 - 3a_2 + 9q)^{3/2}$,
- (4) $-2q a_1 - 2\sqrt{q} a_2 - 2q\sqrt{q} < a_3 < -2q a_1 + 2\sqrt{q} a_2 + 2q\sqrt{q}$.

The Honda-Tate Theorem gives us a bijection between the set of conjugacy classes of q -Weil numbers and the set of isogeny classes of simple abelian varieties over \mathbb{F}_q . Moreover, the characteristic polynomial of a simple abelian variety of dimension 3 over \mathbb{F}_q has the form $p(t) = h(t)^e$ where $h(t)$ is an irreducible Weil polynomial and e is an integer. Obviously e must divide 6.

As remarked by Xing [10], e cannot be equal to 2 or 6, otherwise $p(t)$ would have a real root and real q -Weil numbers ($\pm\sqrt{q}$) correspond to dimension 1 or 2 (according to the parity of n) abelian varieties (see [8]).

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When $e = 3$, using a result from Maisner and Nart [3, Proposition 2.5], we get the following proposition, proved by Xing, which gives us the form of $h(t)$.

Proposition 1.2 (Xing). *Let $\beta \in \mathbb{Z}$, $|\beta| < 2\sqrt{q}$. There exists a simple abelian variety of dimension 3 over \mathbb{F}_q with $h(t) = t^2 + \beta t + q$ if and only if 3 divides n and $\beta = aq^{1/3}$, where a is an integer coprime with p .*

It follows that a simple abelian variety of dimension 3 with a reducible characteristic polynomial has p -rank 0; this fact was proved by González [2]. Note that the Newton polygon of a polynomial from Proposition 1.2 is of type $1/3$ (see Figure 4, Section 4).

It remains to see what happens when $p(t)$ is irreducible ($e = 1$). First, we need an irreducibility criterion for Weil polynomials. In section 3, we prove the following proposition:

Proposition 1.3. *Set*

$$r = -\frac{a_1^2}{3} + a_2 - 3q \quad \text{and} \quad s = \frac{2a_1^3}{27} - \frac{a_1a_2}{3} - qa_1 + a_3$$

and

$$\Delta = s^2 - \frac{4}{27}r^3 \quad \text{and} \quad u = \frac{-s + \sqrt{\Delta}}{2}.$$

Then $p(t)$ is irreducible over \mathbb{Q} if and only if $\Delta \neq 0$ and u is not a cube in $\mathbb{Q}(\sqrt{\Delta})$.

Next, we determine the possible Newton polygons for $p(t)$; this is the aim of Section 4.

Theorem 1.4. *Let $p(t) = t^6 + a_1t^5 + a_2t^4 + a_3t^3 + qa_2t^2 + q^2a_1 + q^3$ be an irreducible Weil polynomial. Then $p(t)$ is the characteristic polynomial of an abelian variety of dimension 3 if and only if one of the following conditions holds*

- (1) $v_p(a_3) = 0$,
- (2) $v_p(a_2) = 0$, $v_p(a_3) \geq n/2$ and $p(t)$ has no root of valuation $n/2$ in \mathbb{Q}_p ,
- (3) $v_p(a_1) = 0$, $v_p(a_2) \geq n/2$, $v_p(a_3) \geq n$ and $p(t)$ has no root of valuation $n/2$ in \mathbb{Q}_p ,
- (4) $v_p(a_1) \geq n/3$, $v_p(a_2) \geq 2n/3$, $v_p(a_3) = n$ and $p(t)$ has no root in \mathbb{Q}_p ,
- (5) $v_p(a_1) \geq n/2$, $v_p(a_2) \geq n$, $v_p(a_3) \geq 3n/2$ and $p(t)$ has no root nor factor of degree 3 in \mathbb{Q}_p .

The p -ranks of abelian varieties in cases 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 are respectively 3, 2, 1, 0 and 0. The abelian varieties in case 5 are supersingular.

It is possible to make condition (5) of Proposition 1.4 more explicit. Indeed, in [5], Nart and Ritzenthaler gave the list of supersingular q -Weil numbers of degree 6. We derive from it the following proposition (see Section 5).

Proposition 1.5. *If $p(t)$ is the characteristic polynomial of a supersingular abelian variety of dimension 3 then one of the following conditions holds*

- (1) $(a_1, a_2, a_3) = (q^{1/2}, q, q^{3/2})$ or $(-q^{1/2}, q, -q^{3/2})$, q is a square and $7 \nmid (p^3 - 1)$,
- (2) $(a_1, a_2, a_3) = (0, 0, q^{3/2})$ or $(0, 0, -q^{3/2})$, q is a square and $3 \nmid (p - 1)$,
- (3) $(a_1, a_2, a_3) = (\sqrt{pq}, 3q, q\sqrt{pq})$ or $(-\sqrt{pq}, 3q, -q\sqrt{pq})$, $p = 7$ and q is not a square,
- (4) $(a_1, a_2, a_3) = (0, 0, q\sqrt{pq})$ or $(0, 0, -q\sqrt{pq})$, $p = 3$ and q is not a square.

2. THE COEFFICIENTS OF WEIL POLYNOMIALS OF DEGREE 6

In order to prove Theorem 1.1, we use Robinson's method (described by Smyth in [7, §2, Lemma]). Fixing a polynomial of degree 3 and doing an explicit calculation we get the following lemma:

Lemma 2.1. *Let $f(t) = t^3 + r_1 t^2 + r_2 t + r_3$ be a monic polynomial of degree 3 with real coefficients. Then $f(t)$ has all real positive roots if and only if the following conditions hold:*

- (1) $r_1 < 0$,
- (2) $0 < r_2 \leq \frac{r_1^2}{3}$,
- (3) $\frac{r_1 r_2}{3} - \frac{2r_1^3}{27} - \frac{2}{27}(r_1^2 - 3r_2)^{3/2} \leq r_3 \leq \frac{r_1 r_2}{3} - \frac{2r_1^3}{27} + \frac{2}{27}(r_1^2 - 3r_2)^{3/2}$ and $r_3 < 0$.

Proof. If $f(t)$ has all real positive roots, so do all its derivatives. Thus condition (1) is obvious. Let $f'_0(t)$ be the primitive of $f''(t)$ vanishing at 0; if we add a constant to $f'_0(t)$ so that all its roots are real and positive, we obtain (2). Repeating this process with a primitive of $f'(t)$ vanishing at 0, we obtain (3). \square

Let $x = (x_1, x_2, x_3) \in \mathbb{C}^3$ and set

$$(1) \quad p_x(t) = \prod_{i=1}^3 (t^2 + x_i t + q),$$

$$f_x(t) = \prod_{i=1}^3 (t - (2\sqrt{q} + x_i)) \quad \text{and} \quad \tilde{f}_x(t) = \prod_{i=1}^3 (t - (2\sqrt{q} - x_i)).$$

If $p_x(t)$ is a Weil polynomial (thus $x_i = -(\omega_i + \overline{\omega_i})$, where $\omega_1, \overline{\omega_1}, \dots, \omega_g, \overline{\omega_g}$ are the roots of $p_x(t)$) then the roots of $f_x(t)$ and $\tilde{f}_x(t)$ are real and positive. Conversely, suppose that the roots of $f_x(t)$ and $\tilde{f}_x(t)$ are real and positive, then if $p_x(t)$ has integer coefficients and it is a Weil polynomial.

For $i = 1, 2, 3$, let a_i denote the coefficient associated to $p_x(t)$ in Proposition 1.1, s_i the i th symmetric function of the x_i 's and r_i and \tilde{r}_i the respective i th coefficients of $f_x(t)$ and $\tilde{f}_x(t)$.

Expanding the expression of $p_x(t)$ in (1), we find

$$\begin{aligned} a_1 &= s_1 \\ a_2 &= s_2 + 3q \\ a_3 &= s_3 + 2qs_1. \end{aligned}$$

In the same way, expanding the expressions of $f_x(t)$ and $\tilde{f}_x(t)$, we find

$$\begin{aligned} r_1 &= -6\sqrt{q} - s_1 & \tilde{r}_1 &= -6\sqrt{q} + s_1 \\ r_2 &= 12q + 4\sqrt{q}s_1 + s_2 & \tilde{r}_2 &= 12q - 4\sqrt{q}s_1 + s_2 \\ r_3 &= -8q\sqrt{q} - 4qs_1 - 2\sqrt{q}s_2 - s_3 & \tilde{r}_3 &= -8q\sqrt{q} + 4qs_1 - 2\sqrt{q}s_2 + s_3. \end{aligned}$$

Therefore we have

$$\begin{aligned} r_1 &= -6\sqrt{q} - a_1 & \tilde{r}_1 &= -6\sqrt{q} + a_1 \\ r_2 &= 9q + 4\sqrt{q}a_1 + a_2 & \tilde{r}_2 &= 9q - 4\sqrt{q}a_1 + a_2 \\ r_3 &= -2q\sqrt{q} - 2qa_1 - 2\sqrt{q}a_2 - a_3 & \tilde{r}_3 &= -2q\sqrt{q} + 2qa_1 - 2\sqrt{q}a_2 + a_3. \end{aligned}$$

The polynomials $f_x(t)$ and $\tilde{f}_x(t)$ satisfy condition 1 of Lemma 2.1 if and only if

$$|a_1| < 6\sqrt{q}.$$

The polynomials $f_x(t)$ and $\tilde{f}_x(t)$ satisfy condition 2 of Lemma 2.1 if and only if

$$4\sqrt{q}|a_1| - 9q < a_2 \leq \frac{a_1^2}{3} + 3q.$$

We find that the first inequality in condition 3 of Lemma 2.1 holds for $f_x(t)$ if and only if it holds for $\tilde{f}_x(t)$ if and only if

$$-\frac{2a_1^3}{27} + \frac{a_1a_2}{3} + qa_1 - \frac{2}{27}(a_1^2 - 3a_2 + 9q)^{3/2} \leq a_3 \leq -\frac{2a_1^3}{27} + \frac{a_1a_2}{3} + qa_1 + \frac{2}{27}(a_1^2 - 3a_2 + 9q)^{3/2}.$$

Finally, $f_x(t)$ and $\tilde{f}_x(t)$ satisfy the second inequality in condition 3 of Lemma 2.1 if and only if

$$-2qa_1 - 2\sqrt{q}a_2 - 2q\sqrt{q} < a_3 < -2qa_1 + 2\sqrt{q}a_2 + 2q\sqrt{q}.$$

Hence Theorem 1.1 is proved.

3. IRREDUCIBLE WEIL POLYNOMIALS

Given a Weil polynomial $p(t) = \prod_{i=1}^g(t^2 + x_it + q)$, we consider its real Weil polynomial $f(t) = \prod_{i=1}^g(t + x_i)$.

Proposition 3.1. *Suppose that $g \geq 2$ and $p(t) \neq (t - \sqrt{q})^2(t + \sqrt{q})^2$. Then $p(t)$ is irreducible over \mathbb{Q} if and only if $f(t)$ is irreducible over \mathbb{Q} .*

Proof. Suppose that $p(t)$ is reducible. It is sufficient to prove that $p(t)$ factors as the product of two Weil polynomials (then $f(t)$ will be the product of its associated polynomials). The polynomial $p(t)$ decomposes as $p(t) = (t - \sqrt{q})^{2k}(t + \sqrt{q})^{2\ell}h(t)$ where $h(t)$ has no real root. If $k \neq \ell$, $\sqrt{q} \in \mathbb{Q}$ and $p(t)$ factors obviously. The same conclusion holds when $k = \ell \neq 0$ and $h(t) \neq 1$. If $k = \ell > 1$ and $h(t) = 1$, we have the decomposition $p(t) = [(t - \sqrt{q})^2(t + \sqrt{q})^2][(t - \sqrt{q})^{2k-2}(t + \sqrt{q})^{2\ell-2}]$. Finally, if $k = \ell = 0$, by hypothesis $h(t)$ is the product of two monic non-constant polynomials which are obviously Weil polynomials.

Conversely, if $f(t)$ is reducible, we can assume (possibly changing labels of the x_i 's) that there exists an integer k between 1 and $(g-1)$ such that the polynomials $\prod_{i=1}^k(t + x_i)$ and $\prod_{i=k+1}^g(t + x_i)$ have integer coefficients. Thus $\prod_{i=1}^k(t^2 + x_it + q)$ and $\prod_{i=k+1}^g(t^2 + x_it + q)$ have integer coefficients and their product is $p(t)$. \square

Now we focus on the case $g = 3$. In order to know if $p(t)$ is irreducible, it is sufficient to check if $f(t)$ (a polynomial of degree 3 with all real roots) is irreducible. To do this, we use Cardan's method. Let us recall quickly what it is.

Fixing a polynomial $h(t) = t^3 + rt + s$, we set $\Delta = s^2 - \frac{4}{27}r^3$. If $h(t)$ has all real roots, we have $\Delta \leq 0$. Moreover, $\Delta = 0$ if and only if $h(t)$ has a double root. When $\Delta < 0$, we set $u = \frac{-s + \sqrt{\Delta}}{2}$. The roots of $h(t)$ are in the form $(v + \bar{v})$ where v is a cube root of u .

We apply this to $f(t) = t^3 + a_1t^2 + (a_2 - 3q)t + (a_3 - 2qa_1)$:

Proof of proposition 1.3. We set $h(t) = t^3 + rt + s$ so that $f(t) = h(t + \frac{a_1}{3})$. The polynomial $f(t)$ is reducible if and only if it has a root in \mathbb{Q} if and only if $h(t)$ has a root in \mathbb{Q} .

If $\Delta = 0$, $f(t)$ is reducible. Suppose that $\Delta < 0$. If u is the cube of a certain $v \in \mathbb{Q}(\sqrt{\Delta})$, we have obviously $(v + \bar{v}) \in \mathbb{Q}$. Conversely, if $h(t)$ has a root in \mathbb{Q} then u has a cube root $v = a + ib$ with $a \in \mathbb{Q}$ and we have

$$u = v^3 = (a^3 - 3ab^2) + ib(3a^2b - b^3).$$

If $a \neq 0$, identifying real parts in the last equality, we see that $b^2 \in \mathbb{Q}$, then, identifying imaginary parts, $b \in \mathbb{Q}(\sqrt{-\Delta})$. Therefore $v \in \mathbb{Q}(\sqrt{\Delta})$. If $a = 0$, then $s = 0$ and $\Delta = \frac{4}{27}r^3 = (\frac{2}{3}r)^2\frac{r}{3}$. Thus $u = \frac{1}{2}\sqrt{\frac{4}{27}r^3} = (\sqrt{\frac{r}{3}})^3$ is a cube in $\mathbb{Q}(\sqrt{\Delta}) = \mathbb{Q}(\sqrt{\frac{r}{3}})$. \square

4. NEWTON POLYGONS

Let $p(t)$ be an irreducible Weil polynomial of degree 3 and e the least common denominator of $v_p(f(0))/n$ where $f(t)$ runs through the irreducible factors of $p(t)$ over \mathbb{Q}_p (the field of p -adic numbers). By [4], $p(t)^e$ is the characteristic polynomial of a simple abelian variety. Thus $p(t)$ is the characteristic polynomial of an abelian variety of dimension 3 if and only if e is equal to 1 that is, $v_p(f(0))/n$ are integers. One way to obtain information about p -adic valuations of the roots of $p(t)$ is to study its Newton polygon (see [9]). The condition " $v_p(f(0))/n$ are integers" implies that the projection onto the x -axis of an edge of the Newton polygon having a slope $\ell n/k$ (with $\text{pgcd}(\ell, k) = 1$) has length a multiple of k . We graph the Newton polygons satisfying this condition and in each case, we give a necessary and sufficient condition to have $e = 1$. The obtained results are summarized in Theorem 1.4.

Ordinary case: $v_p(a_3) = 0$

The Newton polygon of $p(t)$ is represented in Figure 1 and we always have $e = 1$.

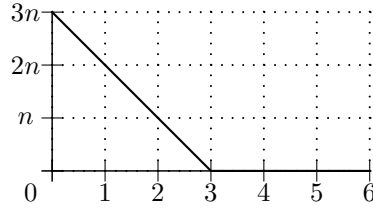
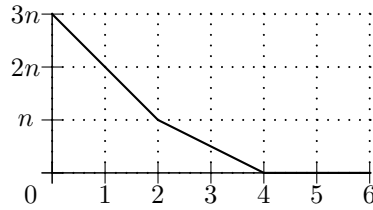


FIGURE 1. Ordinary case

p-rank 2 case: $v_p(a_3) > 0$ and $v_p(a_2) = 0$

The only Newton polygon for which $e = 1$ is represented in Figure 2.

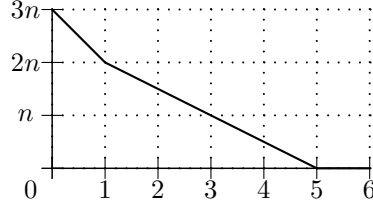
FIGURE 2. p -rank 2 case

This is the Newton polygon of $p(t)$ if and only if $v_p(a_3) \geq n/2$. If this condition holds, $p(t)$ has a factor in \mathbb{Q}_p of degree 2 with roots of valuation $n/2$ and thus $e = 1$ if and only if this factor is irreducible, that is, if and only if $p(t)$ has no root of valuation $n/2$ in \mathbb{Q}_p (note that when n is odd, this last condition always holds).

p-rank 1 case: $v_p(a_3) > 0$, $v_p(a_2) > 0$ and $v_p(a_1) = 0$

The only Newton polygon for which $e = 1$ is represented in Figure 3.

This is the Newton polygon of $p(t)$ if and only if $v_p(a_2) \geq n/2$ and $v_p(a_3) \geq n$. If these conditions hold, $p(t)$ has a factor in \mathbb{Q}_p of degree 4 with roots of valuation $n/2$ and thus $e = 1$ if and only if this factor has no root in \mathbb{Q}_p , that is, if and only if $p(t)$ has no root of valuation $n/2$ in \mathbb{Q}_p .

FIGURE 3. p -rank 1 case

p -rank 0 case: $v_p(a_3) > 0$, $v_p(a_2) > 0$ and $v_p(a_1) > 0$

There are two Newton polygons for which $e = 1$. One is represented in Figure 4.

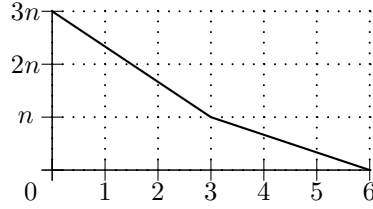


FIGURE 4. Type 1/3 case

This is the Newton polygon of $p(t)$ if and only if $v_p(a_1) \geq n/3$, $v_p(a_2) \geq 2n/3$ and $v_p(a_3) = n$. If these conditions hold, $p(t)$ has two factors in \mathbb{Q}_p of degree 3, one with roots of valuation $2n/3$ and the other with roots of valuation $n/3$; $e = 1$ if and only if those factors are irreducible in \mathbb{Q}_p , that is, if and only if $p(t)$ has no root in \mathbb{Q}_p .

The other Newton polygon is represented in Figure 5; the corresponding abelian varieties are supersingular.

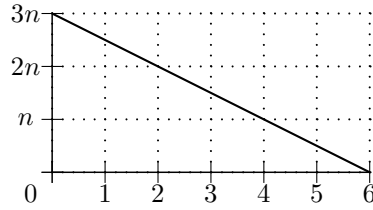


FIGURE 5. Supersingular case

This is the Newton polygon of $p(t)$ if and only if $v_p(a_1) \geq n/2$, $v_p(a_2) \geq n$ and $v_p(a_3) \geq 3n/2$. If these conditions hold, $e = 1$ if and only if $p(t)$ has no root nor factor of degree 3 in \mathbb{Q}_p .

5. SUPERSINGULAR CASE

Nart and Ritzenthaler [5] proved that the only supersingular q -Weil numbers of degree six are

$$\begin{array}{ll} \pm\sqrt{q}\zeta_7, & \pm\sqrt{q}\zeta_9, & \text{if } q \text{ is a square,} \\ \sqrt{q}\zeta_{28} \ (p=7), & \sqrt{q}\zeta_{36} \ (p=3), & \text{if } q \text{ is not a square,} \end{array}$$

where ζ_n is a primitive n th root of unity.

We will use this result to obtain a list of possible supersingular characteristic polynomials as stated in Proposition 1.5. We will have to calculate the minimal polynomial of some algebraic integers; in order to do this, we will often use the (trivial) fact that if α is a root of $f(t) = \sum_{i=0}^n b_i t^{n-i}$ and $a \in \mathbb{C}$ then $a\alpha$ is a root of $f_a(t) = \sum_{i=0}^n b_i a^i t^{n-i}$. We denote by $\phi_n(t)$ the n th cyclotomic polynomial.

- If q is a square, as $\phi_7(t) = t^6 + t^5 + t^4 + t^3 + t^2 + t + 1$, the minimal polynomial of $\sqrt{q}\zeta_7$ (respectively $-\sqrt{q}\zeta_7$) is $p(t) = t^6 + q^{1/2}t^5 + qt^4 + q^{3/2}t^3 + q^2t^2 + q^{5/2}t + q^3$ (resp. $p(t) = t^6 - q^{1/2}t^5 + qt^4 - q^{3/2}t^3 + q^2t^2 - q^{5/2}t + q^3$). If $p \neq 7$, $p(t)$ has no factor of degree 1 and 3 over \mathbb{Q}_p if and only if \mathbb{Q}_p and its cubic extensions do not contain a 7th primitive root of unity; this is equivalent (see [1, Proposition 2.4.1., p.53]) to

$$7 \nmid (p^3 - 1).$$

In the same way, $\phi_9(t) = t^6 + t^3 + 1$ and the minimal polynomial of $\sqrt{q}\zeta_9$ (respectively $-\sqrt{q}\zeta_9$) is $p(t) = t^6 + q^{3/2}t^3 + q^3$ (resp. $p(t) = t^6 - q^{3/2}t^3 + q^3$). If $p \neq 3$, $p(t)$ have no factor of degree 1 and 3 over \mathbb{Q}_p if and only if

$$3 \nmid (p - 1).$$

If $p = 7$ in the first case or $p = 3$ in the second case, $p(t)$ is irreducible over \mathbb{Q}_p (apply Eisenstein's Criterion to $p(t+1)$).

- Suppose that q is not a square. When $p = 7$, as $\phi_{28}(t) = t^{12} - t^{10} + t^8 - t^6 + t^4 - t^2 + 1$, the monic polynomial with roots $\sqrt{q}\zeta_{28}$ is $t^{12} - qt^{10} + q^2t^8 - q^3t^6 + q^4t^4 - q^5t^2 + q^6$ which is the product of

$$t^6 + \sqrt{pqt^5} + 3qt^4 + q\sqrt{pqt^3} + 3q^2t^2 + q^2\sqrt{pqt} + q^3$$

and

$$t^6 - \sqrt{pqt^5} + 3qt^4 - q\sqrt{pqt^3} + 3q^2t^2 - q^2\sqrt{pqt} + q^3.$$

When $p = 3$, as $\phi_{36}(t) = t^{12} - t^6 + 1$, the monic polynomial with roots $\sqrt{q}\zeta_{36}$ is $t^{12} - q^3t^6 + q^6$ which is the product of

$$t^6 + q\sqrt{pqt^3} + q^3$$

and

$$t^6 - q\sqrt{pqt^3} + q^3.$$

The resulting polynomials are characteristic polynomials of abelian varieties of dimension 3 (see [5]).

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